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I. Situation analysis

1. The recurring military crises experienced by the Central African Republic over the past eight years, culminating in the coup d'état of 15 March 2003, are among the factors which have most exacerbated the extreme poverty and vulnerability of the country. The *Human Development Report 2003* ranks the Central African Republic in 168th place among the 173 countries considered, with a human development index of 0.363 in 2001, and social indicators among the lowest in the world. More than 66.6 per cent of the 3.7 million Central Africans live on less than US$ 1 per day. The life expectancy of a Central African at birth, which was 49 years in the late 1980s (1988 general population census), has now dropped to 44.9 years (*World Development Report 2000*), as compared to a gain of nearly 10 years for all developing countries during the same period. Although the mortality rate for children under 5 years of age has dropped from 248 to 180 per 1,000, the Central African Republic still has the highest number of women who die in childbirth (1,100 women per 100,000 live births). No recent surveys have been taken of household living conditions; however, since the national income has continued to decline, it may be assumed that the poverty rate is now much higher. The gross national product (GNP) per capita dropped from $349 in 1995 to $255 in 2001. Among the population groups most affected by poverty are women, children, the Pygmy and Peuhl peoples, girls and older persons, as well as civil servants, some of whom have not been paid for 30 months, and the populations living in remote areas in the East and North.

2. The factors which are exacerbating the poverty and low level of human development include (i) poor governance, characterized by corruption and mismanagement of public affairs, which are at the root of the severe social and economic problems occurring in the country, which, in turn, are a source of political instability; (ii) insecurity provoked by the frequent severe crises which the country has experienced since 1996, whose grave humanitarian consequences caused the United Nations to launch an emergency appeal in April 2003; and (iii) the high incidence of HIV/AIDS which, at 15 per cent, ranks the Central African Republic as the tenth most infected country in the world, and the first most infected in the Central African subregion.

3. It is clear that if the political, social and economic reforms needed to remedy the situation are not swiftly enacted, the Central African Republic will be unable to make real headway in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The first report for the Central African Republic, prepared in 2002, reveals a considerable delay, along with constraints hindering the country's progress under all eight goals. The reforms should endeavour, first and foremost, to bring about a genuine national reconciliation in order to solidify political institutions and stabilize border regions with a view to ensuring security, resuming economic activity, conducting an effective anti-HIV/AIDS campaign and implementing effective policies for growth and sustainable poverty reduction.

4. The new Government in place since March 2003 has thoroughly studied the reforms that need to be undertaken. In June 2003, it drew up a transition road map, covering a period of about 18 months, which should lead to the emergence of new democratic institutions through free, transparent elections at all levels in 2005, preceded by a constitutional referendum. The political programme will be accompanied by a general policy for economic and social recovery, whose key components are: (i) strengthening the foundations of democracy and consolidating

security; (ii) stabilizing public finances; (iii) relaunching production and re-energizing the private sector; and (iv) rehabilitating the social sectors. The success of this programme will depend on the enormous efforts the Government will have to undertake in terms of political commitment and strategic planning, and also on the level of foreign technical and financial support it receives during the transition.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

5. The cooperation programme currently under way between UNDP and the Government covered the period from 1999 to 2001. It was extended twice, up to December 2003, owing to the military and political crises, which made formal programming impossible. The lessons and results gained from the implementation of the programme during that period are described below.

6. *Poverty reduction*. UNDP has supported the Government primarily in launching a poverty reduction programme, using a participatory approach, and in drafting and adopting a national policy and strategy for the promotion of microfinancing. Originally envisaged as a central element of the programme strategy, the participation in this initiative of other agencies of the United Nations system present in the country did not materialize, leaving UNDP as the sole programme lender. Although the poverty reduction programme has facilitated the establishment of social infrastructure and of operational microfinancing structures and mechanisms, the overall results have been very unsatisfactory. An evaluation mission drew the following conclusions: (i) inter-agency participation is not feasible unless all agencies are involved in all phases of a particular process; (ii) when formulating projects and programmes, it is essential not to set excessively ambitious goals, to venture into areas where there are no proven modalities, or to adopt conflicting implementation methods; (iv) within the context of partnership with populations, it is essential to avoid making too many promises before mobilizing the necessary resources; and (v) UNDP would do better to focus its interventions more within strategic areas that accord with its mandate.

7. *Promotion of democratic governance*. UNDP has provided significant technical support to the Government, enabling it to formulate a national programme for the promotion of good governance. Covering various sub-themes, the programme is an indispensable tool for coordinating activities in this area. Its results include research which has provided a solid legal basis for the anti-corruption campaign, a comprehensive audit of public service management, preparations for training public service personnel through the establishment of a central data system, and an assessment of the assistance that will be needed for the holding of elections. The lessons learned are: (i) the need to ensure the political will for reform before launching activities; (ii) the urgent need to establish a direct link between electoral assistance and the design and establishment of permanent, independent electoral institutions; and (iii) the need, in an insecure and politically unstable environment, to make a judicious choice of initiatives to be carried out, taking fully into consideration their impact on the nature and evolution of the crisis situation.

8. *Crisis prevention*. After the political and military crises that shook the Central African Republic in 1996 and 1997, the Government began a process of demobilizing and rehabilitating soldiers and gendarmes, and initiated a resource-mobilization process with the support of UNDP, the United Nations Department of

Political Affairs and Germany. In May 2000, a meeting of foreign partners was organized in New York on the subject of security and development, which resulted in pledges amounting to a total of $6.3 million from the World Bank, Germany, Italy, France, Norway and Canada, making it possible to implement the national disarmament and reintegration programme. Despite the collection of about 1,000 light weapons and ammunition, the national programme was unable to make a significant contribution to resolving the problem posed by the vast circulation of weapons within the population. The main lesson to be learned from this shortcoming is the need to base any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme on a clear policy for the reform and restructuring of the army and the security forces, and on a genuine process of national reconciliation enabling a return to lasting peace and security.

9. *Campaign against HIV/AIDS.* UNDP support to the national committee to combat AIDS permitted that key structure to continue operations during the most difficult moments, particularly after the cessation of loan disbursements from the World Bank, and to carry out its awareness-raising activities within the population to enhance prevention of the epidemic. The insecurity that has prevailed in recent years, has, however, kept a number of important related activities from being carried out, including research on potential social and economic repercussions, which could have helped in incorporating the campaign into national poverty reduction strategies. The multidimensional nature of the epidemic requires more integrated approaches to ensure the effectiveness of the campaign, while the growing number of infected and affected persons calls for special attention to be paid to care management for persons already living with the virus. In addition, the suspension by the World Bank of a loan of more than US$ 15 million for combating HIV/AIDS, as a result of overdue debt payments, is a lesson in the importance of finding unconditional funding sources.

III. Proposed programme

10. Designed to support the transition road map formulated by the Government, the current country programme will cover a three-year period from 2004 to 2006, and its main objective will be to facilitate the rapid and lasting restoration of the constitutional order, security, peace and national reconciliation — an inalienable condition for the sustainable resumption of development activities. To this end, the programme will strengthen national capacities in four areas: (i) promotion of good governance; (ii) poverty reduction; (iii) campaign against HIV/AIDS; and (iv) crisis prevention and recovery. The length of the programme also takes into account the agreement between the United Nations agencies in Central Africa to harmonize their programming cycles permanently starting in 2007. There are ongoing consultations with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), whose current programmes will conclude in 2006. The specific modalities will be determined within the context of the formulation of a new framework for inter-agency cooperation — established by the United Nations agencies during their July 2003 retreat — which will supplement the programming process that began in October 2002 but was set aside because of the armed conflict. This framework for cooperation will include a joint analysis of the country situation and of key programme areas, allowing agencies to reconsider their current programmes in view of changes which have taken place in the country since 15 March 2003. A formal common country assessment (CCA)/United Nations

Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process cannot be conducted, however, until 2006, when new post-transitional authorities and institutions are established.

A. Governance

11. In the area of governance, UNDP support will focus above all on a successful transition in the political and economic spheres, allowing a consensual restoration of the constitutional order through transparent and orderly elections and the resumption of economic activity through effective strategic planning and the technical capacity for carrying out the necessary reforms. As for political governance, the strategy will consist of working closely with interested partners, such as the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division and the bilateral and multilateral partners to strengthen the technical capacities of transition management institutions, in particular the management of the electoral process itself. UNDP will also provide support for facilitating the management and coordination of various forms of assistance to this process by the international community. In order to integrate these activities into the wider context of decentralized democratic governance, UNDP, in consultation with interested partners such as France, will undertake the study on decentralization, which was proposed by the Government in 2002 but set aside because of the lack of security, and work closely with BONUCA on human rights protection.

12. With regard to promotion of dialogue, UNDP will provide support to the organization for national dialogue, ensuring the participation of civil society, grass-roots communities, and particularly women and youth, as well as to a round table of friends of the Central African Republic which the Government intends to organize. The strategy will consist in ensuring the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for consultation and grass-roots civic education, both for the national dialogue and for the constitutional referendum process. Dialogue opportunities will also be created between the State and the private sector, in particular with a view to restructuring two key sectors of the national economy, mining and forestry. That strategic UNDP support should enable the Government to carry out the studies and formulate the proposals needed with a view to a sustainable resumption of the dialogue with the principal lenders such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the European Union, and the bilateral partners.

13. So as to ensure a more solid political basis for all these activities, UNDP will assist the Government that emerges from the 2005 elections in formulating a Horizon 2015 strategic development plan for the Central African Republic in order to better focus national attention on the MDGs. Studies will be conducted on that subject in consultation with the National Long-Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS) programme, the national Advisory Committee on Human Development and the United Nations, placing particular emphasis on such topics as population, demography and social sectors, analysis of the long-term requirements for growth, and formulation of a long-term view of the country's development.

B. Poverty reduction

14. In this area, UNDP support will focus mainly on facilitating the formulation of a strategic framework for poverty reduction. A poverty observatory will also be set

up through the strengthening of the systems for the compilation of reliable disaggregated statistics on key human development indicators. UNDP will also assist in conducting surveys on living conditions in urban and rural milieus, with a view to formulating a national poverty profile and establishing a sound basis for monitoring the attainment of the MDGs, through, inter alia, the regular publication of a national human development report.

15. Once the poverty reduction policies and strategies have been defined, UNDP, along with the Government, will launch pilot programmes for grass-roots communities in collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations in order to enhance participatory development capacities. Accordingly, particular stress will be placed on community rehabilitation, human security, gender equality, peace education and national reconciliation, and specific success indicators will be established for each programme or project. Direct links have already been set up with UNICEF, whose 2000 multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) continues to be an important source of information, and with UNFPA, which is assisting the Government in conducting the census currently in progress.

C. Combating HIV/AIDS

16. In the framework of assistance to the Government in this area, UNDP will conduct an evaluation of the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS with a view to developing appropriate strategies to reduce that impact. It will continue to provide support to the national committee to combat AIDS and to non-governmental partners in their work of planning, monitoring, coordinating and evaluating the implementation of the national action plan. It will provide technical support for the strengthening of national capacities for comprehensive care of persons infected and affected by the epidemic, permitting the latter to continue to be full participants in the country's development efforts. Activities for resource mobilization and the development of care management capacities for infected and affected persons will be carried out in close collaboration with the thematic group of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), non-governmental organizations and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with which implementation agreements are envisaged. In addition to working within the framework of UNAIDS, specific partnerships are planned with UNFPA and UNICEF for the implementation of the care management programme in particular systems for the acquisition and distribution of condoms and medicines, including antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.

17. Among the expected results, it is anticipated that a much greater number of Central Africans living with HIV/AIDS will be effectively treated, as a consequence of the screening and counselling centres and the health units operating in the country's 16 prefectures, as well as of the much greater availability and accessibility of ARV drugs for the poorest members of the population.

D. Crisis prevention and recovery

18. The Government and UNDP plan to focus UNDP support on: (i) the restoration of peace and security through community-based approaches, which will require a thorough review of the national demobilization and reintegration programme; (ii)

the disarming, reintegration and retraining of ex-combatants, in close cooperation with the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme; and (iii) psychological, legal and socio-economic support for women victims of rape and other forms of violence, especially the hundreds of women who were the victims of atrocities by the troops of the Mouvement de libération du Congo of Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These activities will take place within the framework of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policy document which is being finalized with the support of the Multi-Country Programme and UNDP, which should make it possible to have access to the resources of the Multi-Country Programme for a national demobilization and reintegration programme. These actions will be accompanied by UNDP support for the Government to enable it to have a global disaster prevention and response plan and to strengthen its management and coordination abilities in that area. All these actions will take place within the extended framework of UNDP support for the national dialogue process as described in the "Governance" section of the current programme.

E. Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals

19. The main problems encountered in the follow-up to the MDGs in the Central African Republic remain the lack of reliable statistical data on the main indicators and the very low level of awareness of the MDGs at all levels. In order to remedy these shortcomings UNDP will, in addition to its support for the production of reliable statistics by the Poverty Observatory, continue and strengthen its awareness campaigns and undertake a realistic costing for the achievement of the MDGs in the country. It will take the opportunity offered by the launching in October 2003 of its "Africa 2015" campaign to set up a framework for discussion of the MDGs at the national level, as well as a system for monitoring through regular country reports on the MDGs.

F. Other areas of activity

20. While focusing its efforts on the areas described above, UNDP will undertake missions and exploratory studies in the other areas of its mandate, such as energy and the environment and new information technologies, in order to take stock of the situation and create the necessary basis for the definition of political and strategic frameworks for action. Initially, emphasis will be placed on collecting data and other technical information to improve activities in each of the two areas, and programme and project formulation will depend on opportunities for partnership and resource mobilization.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

21. *Implementation strategies*. In the implementation of the identified support activities, priority will be given to national execution modalities, direct execution, the use of national expertise, and the involvement of the United Nations Volunteers. Given the current state of national capacities, direct execution will always involve dimensions of strengthening of national management, monitoring and evaluation

capacities. Execution by United Nations agencies and by other national and international bodies will also be considered whenever the need is felt. To ensure the continuing quality and relevancy of the approaches adopted, UNDP will set up study groups in the areas covered by its mandate, with the participation of national experts from the Government and civil society, and an Advisory Committee on Human Development responsible, inter alia, for conducting the drafting process for national human development reports and related studies. The Policy and Strategy Support Facility set up with the Government in 2002 will remain a central element in the support strategy, enabling rapid response by UNDP to requests for support in the form of technical advice in its intervention areas.

22. *Monitoring and assessment.* Programme monitoring and assessment will be conducted through the results-based management process, which calls for annual reports emphasizing key results obtained or progress achieved in the framework of the country programme. In order to achieve this, specific monitoring and assessment mechanisms will be integrated into all projects and programmes in accordance with current UNDP procedures. A formal mid-term assessment of the programme will take place in July 2005. Special monitoring and assessment mechanisms will be agreed with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the monitoring and assessment of its activities implemented by UNDP in the Central African Republic.

23. *Resource mobilization.* Given the relatively limited level of UNDP financial resources in relation to the scale of real development problems in the Central African Republic, UNDP and the Government will set up a strategy for internal and external mobilization of additional financial resources, with a minimum target of doubling by the end of 2005 the total amount currently available in terms of basic UNDP resources for the country. The nucleus of this strategy will be a significant increase in the quality of UNDP support through credible programmes and projects, the strengthening of advocacy activities in the selected areas of intervention, and the strengthening of the technical and operational capabilities of the local UNDP office.

24. *Partnership.* Partnership will be the core of all UNDP approaches in the framework of the programme. Strategic partnerships are being considered with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with the UNAIDS Thematic Group in terms of the fight against HIV/AIDS, the World Bank and the Multi-Country Programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the Low-Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) initiative, and with France and the European Union in a number of areas of political and economic governance. Through the round table for the friends of the Central African Republic which the Government plans to set up with support from UNDP, a special effort will be made to also involve development partners not resident in the Central African Republic, particularly those covering the Republic from neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Among the new partnerships to be developed, particular account will be taken of the important role played by neighbouring countries in managing the crisis in the Central African Republic, particularly the countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A key place in all these strategies will be given to non-governmental organizations and national and international civil society.

Annex

Results and resources framework for the Central African Republic (2004-2006)

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support/output or programme area (in thousands of United States dollars)*
Objective No. 1: Promotion of good governance in the political, economic and administrative areas				
Facilitate the restoration of constitutional order following the coup d'état of 15 March 2003 and the continuation of administrative, socio-economic and institutional reforms	– Consensual and peaceful political transition – Credible political framework for negotiation with development partners – Institutions controlling public administration must be technically capable and have the necessary means of action	– Full participation by all political and social forces in managing transition – Efficiency and credibility of the institutions of transition, particularly the Government, the National Transition Council and electoral institutions – Improvement of skills of public-service personnel	– National dialogue organized with credible participation by grass-roots communities and civil society – Transparent presidential, legislative and municipal elections and constitutional referendum held – Administrative texts and mandates of supervisory institutions strengthened; sufficient financial and material resources provided to those institutions – New legislation to combat corruption submitted to the new National Assembly (2005) – A central data system for the public service established – A Horizon 2015 development plan established – A recovery plan for the economy of the Central African Republic formulated; a round table for the partners of the Central African Republic organized	Regular resources: 750 Other resources include: funds/trust funds and cost-sharing: 170

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support/output or programme area (in thousands of United States dollars)*
Reform of policies, laws and regulations to support private-sector development	– Mechanisms in place to ensure continuous dialogue between the State and the private sector – A competitive, market-oriented private sector, based on the principles of sustainable and equitable development	Existence of a policy and regulatory framework to promote a competitive, market-oriented private sector and its impact on durability and equity	– General assemblies held in the mining and lumber sectors, stabilization measures adopted and implemented – A "one-stop" agency established to support private-sector actors	Regular resources: 750
Objective No. 2: Poverty reduction				
Development and implementation of poverty reduction policies and strategies	– Adoption by the Government of the strategic framework for poverty reduction – Implementation of equitable mechanisms for planning and allocation of development resources – Improved national capacity for monitoring poverty (human and monetary) and inequality	– Document approved by international financial institutions, serving as the basis for an agreement with the International Monetary Fund for the country's accession to the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) – Amounts of loans allocated to communities at the grass-roots level by type of activity, gender and area, taking fully into account country poverty profiles, and giving priority to the most vulnerable population groups – Strengthening of microcredit mechanisms	– Small-scale surveys conducted on household living conditions – Principal poverty and vulnerability indicators established – Poverty profiles established – National poverty observatory established and operational – Two biannual reports on the MDGs in the country published, and campaigns organized – Long-term plan "Central African Republic 2015" drafted and adopted –Study on costs of MDG achievement published – Two national human development reports to be published by 2006	Regular resources: 1 650 Other resources include: funds/trust funds and cost-sharing: 100

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support/output or programme area (in thousands of United States dollars)*
Objective No. 3: Reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and mortality rates due to tuberculosis and malaria				
Strategies adopted to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce its impact	– National capacity strengthened in the planning and implementation of multisectoral strategies to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce its socio-economic impact – Accessibility of care to the infected and affected population through effective and efficient case management	– Improved coordination of AIDS prevention activities in the country – Reduction in the incidence of HIV/AIDS – Ability of a greater number of infected persons to live an active and productive life	– Study on the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS in the country published, and results used to develop strategies for action to combat poverty – Screening and counselling centres constructed/ rehabilitated in the country's 16 health prefectures – Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs available in health facilities in the area of screening centres for people living with HIV/AIDS – At least five NGOs provided with technical training and equipment in the area of each screening/counselling centre, to promote public awareness and/or care management for persons living with HIV/AIDS – At least 700 people living with HIV/AIDS provided with ARV drugs and monitored regularly during the first two years of the programme	Regular resources: 750 Other resources include: Global AIDS and Health Fund: 25 000
Goal of the United Nations framework plan for development assistance: operationalization of the national mechanism for conflict prevention and risk and disaster management				
Support for the national disaster management plan and the strategy for demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants	A climate of peace and security reigns throughout the country's territory, making possible the recovery of economic activity	– Achievement of the goals of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme – Implementation of the disaster management programme on the basis of the humanitarian appeal	– National disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policy document formulated by the Government – Approximately 6,000 ex-combatants demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life	Regular resources: 816 Other resources: 486

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support/output or programme area (in thousands of United States dollars)*
			– Community security management and civilian disarmament mechanisms established in three of the country's prefectures as a pilot project – 400 volunteer disarmed civilians trained in a productive occupation to facilitate their reintegration	
				Regular resources: 4 716 *Other resources*: 25 756